

CLAIMS FOR AMENDMENTS AND STATUS

Per the preliminary amendment concurrently filed with the above-identified application, claims 1-5 and 7-23 were previously canceled. Claim 6 was amended and claims 24-29 were added. Please amend the pending claims, as filed, and add new claims as follows:

Claim 6. (currently amended) A method for fabricating a microelectromechanical device, comprising the steps of:

- a) providing a silicon substrate having first and second opposing surfaces;
- b) doping said first surface with a dopant of a same conductivity type as a conductivity type of said substrate;
- c) forming a pad oxide on said first surface;
- d) forming a silicon nitride film on said pad oxide;
- e) patterning and etching said silicon nitride film to form at least one silicon nitride contact area on said pad oxide;
- f) performing, after step (e), at least one intervening process step while said silicon nitride film protects said at least one silicon nitride contact area from said at least one intervening process step, wherein at least one of said at least one intervening process steps provides a thermal oxidation of said silicon substrate;
- g) removing, after step (f), said silicon nitride from said at least one silicon nitride contact area and removing any of said pad oxide beneath said at least one silicon nitride contact area, wherein said step of removing said silicon nitride and said pad oxide is performed as an unmasked etch by reactive ion etching, thereby forming at least one contact area on said first surface; and

h) depositing a metal on said at least one contact area.

Claim 24. (previously presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein said etching in step (e) is performed by dry etching.

Claim 25. (canceled)

Claim 26. (canceled)

Claim 27. (currently amended) A method according to claim 6, further comprising shadow masking, before step (g), said at least one silicon nitride contact area ~~and wherein said step of removing said silicon oxide and said oxide is performed by reactive ion etching.~~

Claim 28. (previously presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein step (b) is performed before step (c).

Claim 29. (previously presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein step (b) is performed after step (g) and before step (h).

Claim 30. (new) A method according to claim 6, further comprising silicon etching, after step (f), wherein said oxidation provided by at least one of said at least one intervening process steps provides a mask for said silicon etching.

Claim 31. (new) A method according to claim 30, further comprising a step of forming a pad oxide on said second surface, after step (c) and before step (d), and silicon etching silicon said first and said second opposing surfaces of said substrate.

Claim 32. (new) A method for fabricating a microelectromechanical device, comprising the steps of:

a) providing a silicon substrate having first and second opposing surfaces;

b) doping said first surface with a dopant of a same conductivity type as a conductivity

type of said substrate;

c) forming a pad oxide on said first surface;

d) forming a silicon nitride film on said pad oxide;

e) patterning and etching said silicon nitride film to form at least one silicon nitride contact area on said pad oxide;

f) performing, after step (e), at least one intervening process step while said silicon nitride film protects said at least one silicon nitride contact area from said at least one intervening process step, wherein at least one of said at least one intervening process steps provides silicon etching of said silicon substrate;

g) removing, after step (f), said silicon nitride from said at least one silicon nitride contact area and removing any of said pad oxide beneath said at least one silicon nitride contact area, thereby forming at least one contact area on said first surface; and

h) depositing a metal on said at least one contact area.

Claim 33. (new) A method according to claim 32, wherein said step of removing said silicon nitride and said pad oxide is performed as an unmasked etch by reactive ion etching.

Claim 34. (new) A method according to claim 32, further comprising shadow masking, before step (g), said at least one silicon nitride contact area and wherein said step of removing said silicon oxide and said oxide is performed by reactive ion etching.

Claim 35. (new) A method according to claim 32, wherein step (b) is performed before step (c).

Claim 36. (new) A method according to claim 32, wherein step (b) is performed after step (g) and before step (h).

Claim 37. (new) A method according to claim 32 wherein said step of performing at least one intervening process step further provides thermal oxidation of said silicon substrate.

Claim 38. (new) A method according to claim 32, wherein silicon etching is performed on said first and said second opposing surfaces of said silicon substrate.